

Message Text

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SS-15 NSC-05 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

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O 091837Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9238

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 11800

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, FR, VS, CB, US

SUBJECT: RESETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

REF: STATE 103161

SUMMARY: ON MAY 7 CONGEN AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS DISCUSSED FRENCH POLICY AND OTHER MATTERS CONCERNING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WITH CLAUDE CHAYET, QUAI DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONVENTIONS AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS. CHAYET SAID FRANCE WOULD NOT ADOPT A QUOTA SYSTEM BUT WOULD BASE ENTRY INTO FRANCE ON REFUGEES' CONNECTIONS WITH FRANCE. CHAYET SAID GOF HAD NOT THE SLIGHTEST IDEA OF THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHO MIGHT QUALIFY TO ENTER FRANCE UNDER EXISTING POLICY GUIDELINES. GOF IS NOT ABLE TO BE SO GENEROUS WITH FUNDS FOR TRAVEL OR RESETTLEMENT AS IT WILL BE WITH VISAS. FRENCH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BE ADEQUATELY EFFECTIVE IN FRANCE. GOF HAS CONTACT WITH UNHCR AND ICEM, BUT COOPERATION IS HINDERED BY THE LACK OF RELIABLE INFORMATION. GOF IS READY TO HELP GET TO FRANCE QUALIFIED INDOCHINESE IN AMERICAN CHANNELS, BUT REQUIRES MORE INFORMATION FROM THE U.S. TO DETERMINE HOW IT CAN BE EFFECTIVE. END SUMMARY

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1. FRENCH POLICY ON ACCEPTING REFUGEES: CHAYET SAID THAT FRANCE WOULD NOT ADOPT A QUOTA SYSTEM FOR INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES, BUT IT WAS INACCURATE TO SAY THAT FRANCE WOULD ACCEPT ALL "INDOCHINESE OF FRENCH CULTURE" AS PRESS HAD REPORTED THE GOF SPOKESMAN AS HAVING SAID FOLLOWING THE MAY 7 CABINET MEETING. ACCORDING TO CURRENT CRITERIA THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF REFUGEES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VISAS:

(A) CLOSE RELATIVES OF FRENCH CITIZENS (SPOUSE, SPOUSE'S SINGLE SISTERS AND SINGLE MINOR BROTHERS, PARENTS, PARENTS OF SPOUSE, MINOR CHILDREN OF THE PREVIOUS);
(B) CLOSE RELATIVES OF INDOCHINESE RESIDING IN FRANCE;
(C) INDOCHINESE WHO HAVE HAD A CLOSE CONNECTION WITH FRANCE, FOR THE MOST PART THOSE WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY WORKED FOR THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

CHAYET NOTED THAT THESE CRITERIA WERE BASICALLY THOSE USED BY THE U.S. IN ITS EVACUATION. CHAYET SAID THAT THESE CRITERIA WOULD BE APPLIED WORLD-WIDE, AND INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN SENT MAY 6 TO PERMIT THE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED (HONG KONG, BANGKOK, SAIGON, KUALA LUMPUR) TO ISSUE VISAS WHEN SATISFIED THE APPLICANT QUALIFIED. FOR REFUGEES WHO DO NOT FALL INTO ONE OF THE THREE CATEGORIES, THE PRESUMPTION IS NEGATIVE; THEY WILL NOT BE GRANTED VISAS UNLESS THERE IS SOME SPECIAL REASON TO DO SO.

2. CHAYET INDICATED THAT FRANCE'S GENEROSITY WOULD BE SHOWN IN OTHER WAYS AS WELL. FRANCE WOULD OBVIOUSLY ACCEPT ALL INDOCHINESE WITH FRENCH NATIONALITY (INCLUDING DUAL NATIONALS). FRANCE WOULD PERMIT TO REMAIN IN FRANCE THOSE NOW HERE WHO DO NOT FULFILL THE CRITERIA IN PARA 1. IN PARTICULAR THE MANY THOUSANDS OF INDOCHINESE STUDENTS IN FRANCE, WHETHER UNDER GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS OR NOT, WOULD BE PERMITTED TO EXTEND THEIR CARTE DE SEJOUR AND WOULD BE ABLE TO REMAIN ON IN FRANCE IF THEY FOUND JOBS. FORMER DIPLOMATS AND HIGH OFFICIALS INCLUDING SOME NOW COMING TO FRANCE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD IN GENERAL BE GIVEN PERMISSION FOR AN INDEFINITE STAY IF THEY ASKED FOR IT. FRANCE WOULD ALSO LATER GIVE CONSIDERATION TO LETTING IN MORE DISTANT

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RELATIVES OF FRENCH CITIZENS OR INDOCHINESE RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES OF FRENCH FIRMS, BUT THE RECEPTIVITY WOULD DEPEND ON THE NUMBER WHO ENTER FRANCE UNDER THE CRITERIA IN PARA 1.

3. NUMBERS OF INDOCHINA REFUGEES COMING TO FRANCE:
CHAYET SAID THAT IT WAS COMPLETELY IMPOSSIBLE TO GIVE A FIGURE FOR THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHO WOULD WISH TO

COME TO FRANCE AND WOULD QUALIFY TO DO SO. THE GOF HAD GIVEN APPROVAL FOR ABOUT 300 VISAS A DAY FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS WHILE SAIGON WAS FALLING, BUT THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THESE PERSONS WERE OUT OF SVN OR WOULD NOW BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE. THOSE WHO COME TO FRANCE MAY THERE-

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FORE BE TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE WHO PREVIOUSLY WERE GIVEN PERMISSION TO DO SO. SOME 4,500 VISAS HAD BEEN REQUESTED HERE FOR RELATIVES OF VIETNAMESE IN FRANCE, BUT AGAIN MANY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GET OUT OR WILL BE INELIGIBLE. THE GOF HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT 32 BOATS ARRIVED IN SINGAPORE WITH 6,000 REFUGEES, MANY OF WHOM WISH TO COME TO FRANCE. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW MANY REALLY WISH TO COME TO FRANCE AND OF THAT NUMBER HOW MANY WILL MEET FRENCH CRITERIA. CHAYET HAD HEARD THAT 25,000 OF THE VIETNAMESE EVACUATED WITH U.S. ASSISTANCE WISHED TO COME TO FRANCE, BUT HE HAD HAD NO CONFIRMATION FROM THE USG. CHAYET THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ONLY MUCH LATER THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO COME UP WITH MEANINGFUL STATISTICS.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF REFUGEES BY OTHER COUNTRIES: CHAYET NOTED THAT THE ASEAN COUNTRIES IN PARTICULAR WERE SHOWING NO GREAT ENTHUSIASM IN ACCEPTING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES EVEN FOR THE SHORT TERM. FRANCE'S EC PARTNERS WERE NOT VERY OPEN EITHER. CHAYET THOUGHT THAT THE U.S. HAD ASSUMED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANY OF THESE REFUGEES AND WOULD HAVE TO FULFILL IT UNLESS AN
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INDIVIDUAL WERE WILLING AND ABLE TO GO ELSEWHERE. FRANCE CANNOT OPEN ITS DOORS TO ALL WHO WISH TO COME TO FRANCE NOR TO ALL WHO ARE "CULTURALLY FRENCH." UNDER THE ABOVE CRITERIA IN PARA 1, FRANCE WILL ALREADY BE ACCEPTING A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER.

5. EXPENSES: CHAYET SAID THAT ALTHOUGH FRANCE WOULD BE WILLING TO GRANT ENTRY VISAS FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WHO MEET ITS CRITERIA, IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PAY FOR TRANSPORT HERE OR FOR SUPPORT UPON ARRIVAL -- FRANCE IS ABLE TO PROVIDE ONLY LIMITED SUPPORT EVEN FOR FRENCH NATIONALS ARRIVING FROM INDOCHINA. FRANCE HAS, FOR EXAMPLE, ASKED ICEM TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT CAN PAY THE COST OF TRANSPORT TO FRANCE FOR ELIGIBLE REFUGEES FROM ASIA OR IN THE U.S. CHANNEL. THERE ARE SOME FRENCH PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS -- INCLUDING ONE WHICH OBTAINS MONEY ALSO FROM THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT -- WHICH WILL BE ABLE TO ASSIST REFUGEES WITHOUT MEANS, BUT THE VOLUNTARY AGENCY SITUATION IN FRANCE IS NOT SO HIGHLY DEVELOPED AS IN THE U.S. NEW LEGISLATION MIGHT PROVIDE THE GOF WITH A MODEST BUDGET TO PROVIDE SOME ASSISTANCE.

6. CONTACTS WITH UNHCR AND ICEM: CHAYET HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH UNHCR IN GENEVA; UNHCR HAD ALERTED GOF TO THE VIETNAMESE IN SINGAPORE WHO WISH TO COME TO FRANCE. FRANCE WITHDREW FROM ICEM BECAUSE THE ORGANIZATION DEPARTED FROM ITS ORIGINAL INTENTIONS, BUT CHAYET HAS COOPERATED WITH ICEM ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. CHAYET COMMENTED THAT HE HAD FOUND BOTH ORGANIZATIONS LACK INFORMATION MAKING COOPERATION DIFFICULT.

7. REFUGEES IN U.S. CHANNEL WHO WISH TO COME TO FRANCE: CHAYET SAID IT WAS URGENT TO LEARN THE NUMBER OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THE U.S. CHANNEL WHO WOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO COME TO FRANCE AND WHO WISHED TO DO SO. THEN THE GOF COULD BE ABLE TO DETERMINE THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM AND COULD DECIDE WHETHER THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS WOULD WARRANT SENDING A SPECIAL OFFICER FROM FRANCE OR FROM A CONSULAR POST IN THE U.S. TO GUAM OR SOME OTHER AREA NOT NEAR A FRENCH CONSULATE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE VISA SERVICES. (GUAM IS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO

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CONSULAR DISTRICT). ALTERNATIVELY, VISAS CAN BE ISSUED IN THE U.S. SINCE THE FALL OF SAIGON, THE GOF HAS AUTHORIZED THE ISSUANCE OF OVER 40 VISAS TO PERSONS IN U.S. CHANNEL. THEY HAVE GIVEN AN "ATTESTATION DE VISA" TO RELATIVES REQUESTING VISAS IN FRANCE AND INSTRUCTED THEM TO CABLE NOTIFICATION TO RELATIVES ON GUAM. IN ADDITION, THE QUAI HAS CABLED THE VISA AUTHORIZATION TO FRENCH CONGEN IN SANFRANCISCO. QUAI HAS HAD WORD THAT THE CONGEN HAS BEEN UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE NOTIFICATION OF THE VISA AUTHORIZATION TO U.S. MILITARY OFFICIALS ON GUAM. THE QUAI REQUESTED EMBASSY PARIS TO ASSIST BY SENDING NOTIFICATION OF VISA AVAILABILITY TO U.S. MILITARY AUTHORITIES ON GUAM AND TO VARIOUS REFUGEE CENTERS IN THE U.S. QUAI PROPOSES TO SEND EMBASSY DAILY COPIES OF VISAS AUTHORIZED, INCLUDING INDICATION OF LOCATION OF FRENCH CONGEN WHERE VISAS WILL BE ISSUED, WHICH WILL BE DETERMINED BY LOCATION OF REFUGEES (I.E. SAN FRANCISCO, LOS ANGELES, NEW ORLEANS). THE CONSULATES, ACCORDING TO QUAI, WILL ISSUE VISAS WITHIN TWO WORKING DAYS FROM TIME REFUGEE APPLIES AT OFFICE. QUAI REQUESTS THAT U.S.

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MILITARY AUTHORITIES GIVE EACH REFUGEE THE NECESSARY PERMISSION TO ALLOW THEM TO REACH NEAREST CONSULATE. THE EMBASSY, UPON RECEIPT DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE, PROPOSES TO CABLE SUCH LISTS TO DEPARTMENT FOR FORWARDING TO PROPER MILITARY AUTHORITIES ON GUAM/WAKE AND AT U.S. REFUGEE CENTERS. PLEASE CONFIRM SOONEST WHETHER THIS PROCEDURE IS ACCEPTABLE AND IF SO TO WHOM CABLE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED.

8. AS FOR TRANSPORTATION TO FRANCE OF INDOCHINESE IN U.S. CHANNEL, THE GOF CAN PROVIDE NO ASSISTANCE. CHAYET SUGGESTED THAT IF THE APPLICANTS OR RELATIVES CANNOT PAY, ICEM OR SOME OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION SHOULD DO SO.

9. COMMENT. CHAYET IS CLEARLY WORKING VERY HARD ON THE FRENCH ASPECTS OF THE INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROBLEM AND IS AS WELL INFORMED AS ANYONE ELSE HERE ON THE PROBLEM. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR BOTH THE U.S. AND FRANCE IF WE COULD RESPOND POSITIVELY TO CHAYET'S
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REQUESTS (PARA 7). WHILE FRANCE WILL BE WILLING TO TAKE A DISPROPORTIONATELY LARGE NUMBER OF INDOCHINESE UNABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRIES, WE BELIEVE FRANCE WILL NEED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN DOING SO.
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